

After the Election

- Reconcile Poll Books
- Verify Absentee Voters Did Not Vote at Polls
- Investigate Special Ballots
- Process Absentee Ballots
- Process Write-In Votes
- Reconcile Absentee Ballots
- Credit Voters

"Special Ballots" are the same as "Provisional Ballots."

HAVA uses the term "Provisional Ballots."

Reconcile Poll Books
-Ballot Accountability

- Reconciliation should begin as soon as possible.
- Check Ballot Accountability Form against poll site precinct results.
- Every discrepancy should be investigated.
- # ballots counted + # ballots not counted = # ballots issued
(Ballots not counted include write-ins, duplication/enhancement and special ballots)



Reconcile Poll Books

-Ballot Accountability

- Investigate any discrepancies
 - Check the math on the accountability form
 - Recount signatures in poll book
 - Count ballot stubs
 - Check ballot control record
 - Check supplies/bins for missing ballots
 - Check number of write-in ballots
 - Check number of duplicated/enhanced ballots
 - Check special and spoiled ballots
 - Look at the totals of other precincts
 - Hand count the ballots

The reconciliation process for poll and provisional voters is required in Chapter 434-253 WAC. Ballot accountability forms are required for various steps in the process.

The maintenance of an audit trail and the reconciliation process for absentee ballots is required in WAC 434-240-270(1-7). Chapter 434-240 WAC covers the processing of absentee ballots, including an absentee daily log to reconcile the status of all absentee ballots received or returned.



Reconcile Poll Books (Precinct Count/DREs)


- Each counter's results should be compared with the poll site precinct results.
- If there are both optical scan ballots (central or precinct count) and DREs at a poll site, the number of optical scan ballots issued plus the number of DRE votes should equal the number of signatures in the poll book.



Reconcile Poll Books


-Ballot Accountability

- DOCUMENT
 - If you cannot resolve difference, even if it's only one vote, document the steps you took trying.
 - Document everything you do anyway.
- Finish your reconciliation before you certify the election.




Verify Absentee Voters Did Not Vote at Polls

- Check absentee ballots issued after the poll books were printed against poll books to ensure absentee voters did not vote at the polls




As a general rule, one spouse may not sign the other spouse's ballot.

Exception: Spouses often mis-sign each other's ballot security envelope. Most auditors will treat this as an honest mistake if they can match both signatures on the other one's envelope. -- and will count both ballots.




Verify Absentee Voters Did Not Vote at Polls

- If they DID vote at the polls:
 - Investigate
 - Send to Canvassing Board
 - The Canvassing Board notifies the Prosecuting Attorney (required by law)
- If they did NOT vote at the polls:
 - Credit voter for voting
 - Tabulate ballot




Investigate Special Ballots

- Registered in a different precinct
- Not registered to vote
- Administrative error
- Issued absentee ballot
- Any other situation




WARNING: provisional ballots requires extra staff in a Presidential election year.




Investigate Special Ballots

-Registered in another county

- Send special ballots to their counties within 5 days of the election
- If you are a punch card county, don't forget to include the Ballot Guide!







Investigate Special Ballots

-Registered in another precinct

- If the issues are the same
 - Recommend Canvassing Board count entire ballot
- If no issues are the same
 - Recommend Canvassing Board does not count
- If issues are partially the same
 - Recommend Canvassing Board duplicate ballot (marking applicable issues) and count







Investigate Special Ballots

-Not registered to vote


- Investigate
 - If cancelled, check if canceled properly
- Recommend Canvassing Board does NOT count






Investigate Special Ballots
-Administrative error


- Correct Error
- Determine the issues for which the voter is eligible to vote
- Recommend Canvassing Board count






Investigate Special Ballots
-Issued absentee ballot

- Determine if voter returned absentee ballot
 - If they did, count absentee ballot and not special ballot
 - If they did not, recommend Canvassing Board count special ballot
 - Wait to count until you are sure the absentee ballot did not come in.



Investigate Special Ballots

- **REMEMBER TO KEEP SPECIAL BALLOTS SECURE!**



Treat ballots like money.

Two election workers must be with unsecured ballots at all times.



Process Absentee Ballots



- Continue to check signatures, check postmarks, open envelopes, inspect ballots, etc.



- Set aside any absentee ballots postmarked after election day



EXCEPTION:

Military and overseas voters' ballots go by the date with the signature, not the postmark.



Process Absentee Ballots



- Set aside any return envelopes with questionable signatures
 - The Canvassing Board should have guidelines for you
 - (i.e. they may have instructed you to accept a signature if three letters match any less, and they want to examine it before making a decision)





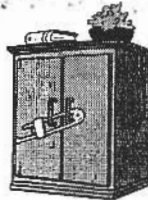
Process Absentee Ballots



REMEMBER TO
KEEP BALLOTS
SECURE!



Some may ease off
security after the
election



THEY SHOULDN'T!!





Process Write-In Votes

- This process will change with the new primary
- If the candidate filed a declaration of candidacy as a write-in (they have until the day before the primary or election), the voter only needs to write:
 - The candidate's name in the appropriate area



Process Write-In Votes

- If the candidate has NOT filed a declaration of candidacy as a write-in, the voter needs to write:
 - The candidate's name,
 - Office sought
 - Position number
 - Party (if applicable)



Process Write-In Votes

- Keep a tally or log of write-in votes for each office
- You do not have to tally votes for individual candidates unless the votes will change the outcome of the election
- You do tally total write-in votes for all races and candidates (i.e. Evergreen County has 100 write-in votes)



Process Write-In Votes

- If the number of write-in votes changes the outcome, include the total write-in votes for that candidate in the abstract
- If other counties are involved, check with them to find total
- If it is a statewide race, write-ins need to change the outcome on the state level



Process Write-In Votes

- Punch Card
 - Check regularly voted ballot before separating from write-in portion to ensure they did not overvote





Process Write-In Votes

- Punch Card
 - If they voted in both places for the same candidate (i.e. punched the position for Joe Smith and wrote in Joe Smith) it is NOT an overvote.
 - Count response position



Process Write-In Votes

■ Punch Card

- If they voted in both places for different candidates, it is an overvote

- Duplicate or enhance the ballot





Process Write-In Votes

■ Op-Scan

- Make sure the marking area (oval, arrow, box, etc.) is filled in for the write-in and also make sure there is no other areas filled in for that race

- If the marking area is not completed for the write-in candidate, DO NOT count it





Reconcile Absentee Ballots

- Absentee ballot reconciliation is not complete until ALL absentee ballots are processed including those sent to Canvassing Board

- # Ballots counted
- + # Ballots rejected
- # total ballots received





Reconcile Absentee Ballots

- Diligent daily reconciliation of absentee ballots, make final reconciliation a breeze
- Final reconciliation discrepancies entail going through ballots precinct by precinct to find error

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Credit Voters

- Polling Place
 - If they signed, give them credit
 - Tip: While crediting poll books, mark voters with changes (name, address, deceased) with a removable tab- it will make post election clean up faster
 - Reconcile number of voters credited in each poll book to ballots cast (counted + rejected)

WAC 434-253-060 Credit for voting. All voters who are issued a ballot shall be credited for participating in that primary or election by an appropriate notation in the poll books. The county auditor shall ensure that each person for whom a notation appears in the precinct list of registered voters receives credit for voting on his or her permanent registration record.

WARNING: "Credit for voting" does not mean the voter cast a valid ballot. An absentee voter whose ballot arrived one day late is "credited" with "voting." An absentee voter who returns a security envelope with no ballot or an unmarked ballot is "credited" with "voting." This is contrasted with "Reconciliation" which is "# Ballots Counted" + "# Ballots rejected" = # Total Ballots Received.




Credit Voters

CREDIT POLL BOOKS RIGHT AWAY!

A lot needs to get done, so get this out of the way.


Remember- write-ins and duplications are included, but not special ballots





Credit Voters

- Absentee Voters
 - Only get credit for returning a ballot, not requesting one
 - If postmarked after election, you may give them credit
 - DO NOT COUNT THEIR BALLOT!
 - Credit after certification to not alter validation numbers



Credit Voters

- Special situations
 - Give the benefit of the doubt to the voter
 - If they voted a special ballot in the wrong precinct and nothing counted, you may give them credit
 - If their signatures didn't match do NOT give them credit
 - If they didn't sign the affidavit, do NOT give them credit

Reconciliation wraps up into a report with county-wide totals:

WAC 434-262-030 Auditor's abstract of votes. No later than the tenth day following any primary or special election and the fifteenth day following any general election the county canvassing board shall meet and canvass all absentee ballots not previously processed under the provisions of chapter 29A.40 RCW, together with all special and challenged ballots. Upon completion of this canvass the board shall direct the county auditor to include all absentee ballot totals and all challenged and special ballot totals, or legislative district subtotals if applicable, in the preliminary abstract of votes prepared pursuant to WAC 434-262-020. The county auditor shall then add these totals to the existing precinct totals. The ensuing report, containing a count of all ballots cast in the election, subtotal reports by legislative district, and county-wide totals shall constitute the auditor's abstract of votes.

WARNING: Do not confuse "reconciliation" with "crediting."

The Importance of Reconciling Your Ballots

1. A punch card county was involved in a recount of a congressional district. During the recount, they discovered there were around 50 ballots that were put behind the wrong header card on election night. They corrected the error for the recount by putting the ballots behind the right header card. Result? They had to explain why there were 50 more ballots in that precinct that were not there election night and why the final official results were incorrect.
2. There was once an op-scan county that discovered after the election was certified that in many precincts they had more ballots cast than they had registered voters.

In these instances, the county certified results that were incorrect. Both of these counties were in awful positions that were totally avoidable. All they had to do was reconcile their ballots. In the first example, the county could have corrected the problem prior to certification and the recount would have been the same as the certified results. Both situations would have been avoided by reconciling their poll ballots counted on election night to the number on the ballot accountability oath.

We all make mistakes, but isn't it better to discover them and correct them without having to do it with an audience of candidates, the press, observers, etc.?

Reconciling your ballots, complete accountability, is the only way for you to "reconstruct" the election. This is your documentation that you know everything was done correctly and according to statute.

Note: The significance of the colored envelopes is as follows:

Note: The significance of the colored envelopes is as follows:

- Manila envelopes are those absenteees which were issued prior to the printing of the pollbooks. These voters have a notation listed next to their name in the pollbook stating that they have been issued an absentee ballot.
- Pink envelopes are those absenteees which were issued after the printing of the pollbooks. These ballots must be checked before opening to verify that the voter did not also vote at the
- Green envelopes are those voters in VOTE-BY-MAIL precincts wherein all registered voters receive a mail ballot.

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